

## Reflection

This research study was implemented to analyze the effects of integrating technological tools that used multisensory approaches in a Shakespeare unit. Because the findings of this study were the opposite of the researcher's expectations, a few new applications need to be examined. There was a clear indication that students respond well when technology is used in the classroom, but they still need interaction with the teacher for total understanding. Allowing the students time to reflect on what they read and to ask questions really became a valuable tool in the total comprehension of Shakespeare's language.

Also, the researcher chose to use Act 1 of *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, whereas there are four more acts that could have been used. Could this study be continued using the remaining four acts of the play? Would a continuation of the study in later acts produce different results? The reason these questions arise is because students generally struggle with the play. One reason why is because the characters' names are so different from modern names. If readers do not know if a character is male or female, understanding the plot could be difficult. Another feature of the play that causes confusion is that many of characters have names that begin with the letter "C" (Caesar, Caius Cassius, Casca, Caius Ligarius, Cicero, Cimber, Claudius, Clitus, Cinna, Cato, and Calphurnia). Because these names look very similar, students need time to know who is who. It is the researcher's belief that students would comprehend Shakespeare's language and the plot of *Julius Caesar* once they are comfortable with character identification. This generally happens later in the play when students can differentiate between the Caesar's supporters and the conspirators.

Another attractive aspect that the latter acts of the play provide is more action. Modern-day students love action; this becomes evident in the types of movies they favor. In *Julius*

*Caesar*, the action starts to pick up at the beginning of Act 3. Caesar is killed, Antony's funeral speech whips the commoners into a violent frenzy, Brutus and Cassius flee Rome, and eventually a war breaks out. By reviewing Act 1 with all classes before moving ahead with the remainder of the play and to check for understanding, the researcher is giving the students the opportunity to enjoy the action-filled events that occur later in the plot.

A few applications also need to be considered because of a few struggles that occurred during the study. The first challenge was getting the students to return their Parent Permission Forms which might have changed the outcome of the study. The students who did not return the forms still participated in the classroom activities (reading, posttest, and survey), although their results were not used as part of the data analysis. Ironically, several of these students were the students who appeared less focused than the study participants. The second struggle appeared in both the listening group and the watching group. Both groups complained that the technology used was too fast. It was a challenge to stop the tape or video clip to point out key events or answer the students' questions. One way that this will be changed in the future is by slowing down the reading of the play. This revision will allow students the much-needed opportunities to ask questions when they do not understand the literature. Also, if technology is used to teach Shakespeare in the future, it will be incorporated as a supplementary tool after reading sections of the play.

Although adding technology proved to have little effect on students' scores when comprehending the language of Shakespeare, one of the successes of integrating technology into the curriculum was the increase in focus. While observing the students in the listening and watching groups, the researcher noticed the energy levels were higher when using the

technology. The sound effects and voice inflections helped them understand the mood of different scenes within the act. They also were exposed to proper pronunciation of the words.

When analyzing the traditional methods used in the past, it becomes evident to the researcher that new methods need to be considered. Reading aloud day-after-day can be grueling for both the students and the teacher. Trying to get the students interested in the play when they struggle with Shakespeare's language is very difficult. The most common method used was assigning parts and reading the play aloud. This takes much class time to implement and the undivided attention of the teacher. Some students are better readers than others, so listening to them struggle with the language interferes with the class's comprehension of the play. Reading *Julius Caesar* aloud three classes a day can be quite repetitive and tiring for the teacher as well. Although these are characteristics of reading Shakespeare aloud, they also produced the biggest success of the study. Students in the reading group had the highest scores. They were only slightly above the listening group, but the survey produced reasons why they enjoyed the traditional method. They really liked the interaction between them and the researcher. Information was explained to them, and they did not have to move on with the reading until everything was understood.

### Recommendations

Before considering the action plan for this study, the researcher documented the many questions that arose while the study was being conducted. They are as follows:

*Would the mean scores show more variation between groups if the study was completed later in the play?* As mentioned earlier, students generally struggle with characters and plot

events in Shakespeare's plays. Having the advantage of reading one or two acts before the action research is implemented may allow more stable results in regards to the use of technology.

*Should more than one act be used when conducting action research?* Reading Act 1 took less than one week for all three study groups. Results may have been different if the action research lasted longer throughout a few of the acts instead of just one. Students would have more time to get comfortable with the author's style and the plot and overall more exposure.

*Does grade point average (GPA) of the study participants have any place in the data analysis?* After the study was completed, the researcher reviewed the participants. Although GPA was not used when analyzing test scores, the researcher found that the group with the lowest mean score also, as a whole group, showed the lowest academic achievement in the past.

*Is the time that the students have class have any impact on their learning?* This question came to mind because one of the study groups (watching group) had class after lunch. During observation, it seemed like this class had lots of pent-up energy compared to the two morning classes. As a result, maybe the participants seemed to have less focus than the morning groups.

*Can technology be used in other ways to enhance the learning of Shakespeare's language?* Because the participants liked using technology when learning Shakespeare, different methods should be utilized. Using the multisensory approach still will reach students with different learning styles, and technology can fulfill that role.